

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 15, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2021**

---

**Introduced by Assembly Member Ridley-Thomas**

February 16, 2016

---

An act to add Section 2301 to the Elections Code, relating to ~~equal opportunities~~ elections.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2021, as amended, Ridley-Thomas. ~~Equal opportunities. Election process: public observation: international election observers.~~

Existing law generally permits the public to observe the election process. Existing law requires the precinct board member to conduct certain election day procedures in the presence of all persons assembled at the polling place. Existing law requires the semifinal official canvass and official canvass to be open to the public. Existing law requires the processing of vote by mail ballot return envelopes, and the processing and counting of vote by mail ballots, to be open to the public. Existing law requires a recount to be conducted publicly. Existing law permits interested persons to participate in a public review and public hearing process for the certification or conditional approval of a ballot marking system.

This bill would allow an international election observer, as defined, to be provided uniform and nondiscriminatory access to all stages of the election process that are open to the public. This bill would prohibit an international election observer from interfering with a voter in the preparation or casting of the voter's ballot, with a precinct board member of an elections official in the performance of his or her duties, or with the orderly conduct of an election.

~~The California Constitution prohibits state and local government agencies from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment to any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, and public contracting.~~

~~This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would promote equal opportunities for employment, education, and public contracting.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1     SECTION 1. Section 2301 is added to the Elections Code, to  
2     read:

3     2301. (a) An international election observer may be provided  
4     uniform and nondiscriminatory access to all stages of the election  
5     process that are open to the public, including the public review  
6     period for the certification of a ballot marking system, the  
7     processing and counting of vote by mail ballots, the canvassing  
8     of ballots, and the recounting of ballots. An international election  
9     observer shall not interfere with a voter in the preparation or  
10    casting of the voter's ballot, with a precinct board member or an  
11    elections official in the performance of his or her duties, or with  
12    the orderly conduct of an election.

13    (b) For purposes of this section, "international election  
14    observer" means a person who witnesses the administration of an  
15    election in this state and who is an official representative of an  
16    international organization such as the United Nations, the  
17    Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or the  
18    Organization of American States.

19    SECTION 1. ~~It is the intent of the Legislature to enact~~  
20    ~~legislation that would promote equal opportunities for employment,~~  
21    ~~education, and public contracting.~~